



# THE ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC.

## Magazine Section.



THE CONTENTS OF THE ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC SUNDAY MAGAZINE ARE PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.  
PUBLISHED EVERY WEEK, SEVENTH AND OLIVE STREETS, ST. LOUIS, MO., \$1.00 PER YEAR. Entered at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo., a second-class matter in November, 1897.

NINETY-SECOND YEAR.

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 1900.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

## THE STORY OF THE ASSASSINATION OF ALEXANDER II.

Now Told for the First Time. By an Eyewitness and Friend, Richard Count Pfeil, Aid-de-Camp to the Late Czar.

SCENES AT THE TIME OF THE ASSASSINATION.

DETAILS OF THE MURDEROUS PLOT.



ALEXANDER II.



LORIS WARNS THE CZAR

GRAND DUCHESS ALEXANDRA JOSEPHOVNA URGES THE CZAR TO ATTEND THE TROOPING.



ALEXANDER III.



THE CZAR AT THE TROOPING OF THE COLORS.

### CHAPTER I.

#### Woman's Influence Twice Moves the Czar.

In the assassination of Czar Alexander, on the third Sunday of March, 1881, two women played a decisive part, while a third succeeded almost in forestalling that awful tragedy. Two of them, the sad imperial lady who unconsciously urged her beloved cousin to death, and the other whose tears and entreaties came near saving him, are still alive.

During the early morning hours of the day named the great Winter Palace was alive from vestibule to attic with hurrying officials, guardsmen and servants, for Alexander had announced to the majordomo at midnight that he would attend the trooping of the colors in St. Michael's Barracks.

This ceremony takes place every Sunday afternoon at 1 o'clock, and in his happier days the Emperor seldom missed the grand spectacle. Of late, however, nihilist threats and rumored conspiracies had kept him away from this favorite pastime, to the profound regret of officers and men, who looked upon his Majesty's attendance as a special boon and a promise of gracious words or even more tangible rewards.

This time the Bodyguard Sappers were to parade before the Czar, and it was whispered that Alexander looked forward to the event with much pleasure. Indeed, so joyful were his anticipations that he ordered the emblems of mourning removed from his equipage, though the Empress Marie was only dead eight months.

The Czar was standing on one of the windows overlooking the palace square with its colossal granite monument, when, toward 1 o'clock, he uttered a little cry of surprise.

"Another attack of asthma, Sacha!" asked Princess Jouriewsky, whom Alexander had married soon after his first wife's death to legitimize their three children.

"No, thank God, but Loris is racing toward the house as if his troops were chased by wolves. Something must have happened. Leave me, my child, and take our little ones away with you."

Loris Count Melnikoff was then Minister of the Interior and Grand Lord Prosecutor of Russia, with unlimited authority. He was a man alike tried in war and peace. As a General his name was associated with some of the foremost later-day successes of the Russian arms; as administrator he had won golden opinions as Governor of the Caucasus and of Circassia, in fighting Black Death, and as a most formidable hunter-down of conspirators and revolutionists. He possessed Alexander's fullest confidence. The Emperor used to say of him: "My Loris is as wide-awake as was Napoleon's Fouché, but doesn't keep his pockets full of mistresses and assassins to throw his master into fits of delight or terror, as occasion demands. That's why I like him."

Alexander received the favorite with his usual somewhat ceremonious warmth, but curiosity soon got the better of him.

"What is it? I hope nothing to interfere with to-day's plans," he cried, after inviting the Count to a seat, while, at the same time, he compelled him to remain standing by holding onto one of his uniform buttons.

"Begging your Majesty's pardon, I am afraid—yes."

"If anything is planned against the palace we must first send Catherine Michailovna (Princess Jouriewsky) and the children away."

The Emperor bent forward to strike a belt, but Melnikoff stayed his hand. "I implore your Majesty to do me the honor to listen. I shall be brief."



This was the Minister's report: After working on a certain clue indicative of the existence of a new conspiracy for two or three months, the police had caught the leader of the latest plot, Sholjaboff, in the course of the previous night, and Loris had worked for seven hours to persuade him to confess.

Thirty minutes ago the culprit broke down. This was the plan: The Czar was to be murdered, by means of bombs, on his next ride through the city. Alexander looked relieved. "Well, as you got the arch-conspirator, the plan, if it ever had real existence, must be off, and so I may go to my trooping of colors in peace."

"But," cried Loris, turning deathly pale, "I beseech your Majesty to consider. If I understand rightly, you insist upon doing the very thing most fraught with danger at this moment. You must not go, upon my soul and conscience, I cannot permit you to go to the trooping of the colors."

The Emperor smiled at hearing himself addressed "you" without the prescribed title, but immediately assumed a show of severity. "Now, don't try to make me a coward," he said. "I made up my mind, and thou wilt oblige me by telling thy story to my wife. By the way," he added, "thou wilt sup with us to-night. Come early and stay late, my good Loris."

The last words were prophetic. Loris returned to the palace long before night, to go away in the wee hours of the morning cursing himself for not having braved

decease by insisting upon his original demand. He made, however, one last effort on that morning by appealing to Princess Jouriewsky. Alexander's wife no sooner heard of the danger threatening him than she took her children, George, 8 years, Olga, 7 years, and the baby, Catherine, 2½ years old, and ran to the father's apartments. There all four threw themselves on their knees and begged and implored him with many tears and protestations, not to leave the palace that day.

Alexander was, after all, a weak-hearted man. As the cries of sorrowing mothers and wives drove him to the rash peace of St. Stefano, which cost him his popularity, so the beautiful Catherine and her pretty children moved him from his purpose so authoritatively asserted. He consented with an aching heart and against his will, he said. But while Catherine rushed to inform Count Melnikoff, who was waiting in her boudoir, the Grand Duchess Alexandra Josephovna, widow of the late Grand Duke Constantine, was aroused. This great lady, born Princess of Saxe-Altenburg, was Alexander's favorite sister-in-law, and had great influence with him. The Czar always played the gallant toward her, never failing to show her the utmost courtesy. Her every wish was law, as far as he was able to fulfill it.

In the course of their talk the Czar remarked that he had to abandon his intended visit to St. Michael's Barracks because he felt not well enough to sit his horse.

"Too bad," replied her Imperial Highness, "this very day Constantine hoped to have the honor to thank thee for the commission thou hast conferred upon him."

Constantine, then scarcely 23, is Alexandra Josephovna's youngest son. He is now aid-de-camp of Emperor Nicolas, a Major General of the Army and president of the Imperial Academy of Sciences.

"If that is the case, I must go, sick or well," laughed Alexander; "take my word for it, beautiful Josephovna, I will be there."

Thus a man's whim of chivalry undid the work of love and devotion.

At ten minutes past 12 the Czar ordered me to inspect his carriage, a small kalyaska.

Frolov Sherjef, the old body coachman, usually full of good cheer and anecdote, greeted me morosely.

"I harnessed up the swiftest flyers in the stable," he said significantly; "my life on it that they can outrun Colonel Iworshinsky's, if necessary." The Colonel was, at that time, Master of the St. Petersburg Police and his famous team was reputed to be the fastest in the city.

I didn't care to ask Frolov's reason for the precaution. I simply said: "His Majesty expects you to carry him as safely as always."

"God help that," said the old fellow, and brushing aside the long beard that hung over his breast with its numerous decorations, he lifted one of the golden crosses to his lips and kissed it devoutly. Two minutes later I was speeding toward St. Michael's Barracks to announce his Majesty's coming.

The Czarowitz, who was about to become Alexander III., had preceded me a minute before and had taken his stand on the Sappers' right flank. Aside from him, there were some fifty Generals present, among them Duke Peter of Oldenburg, the Emperor's intimates, who survived him but a short time; the Grand Duke Constantine, Prince Menshikoff, the white-haired Suworoff, a grandson of the celebrated Field Marshal, and other men of rank and distinction. Every officer of the Guards was on his post or among the spectators, all wearing brand-new uniforms, for the Czar examined his men most critically on such occasions. Many of the younger men had even gone so far as to have their horses shod with silver—anything to get a



THE ASSASSINATION OF ALEXANDER II.

PETERS